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The BG News April 29, 2009

Bowling Green State University

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Wednesday

April 29, 2009

Volume 103, Issue 148
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CAMPUS

Presidential college visit

President Obama hopes to rebuild economy, shares plan at Georgetown University | **Page 3**

FORUM

He is back

Columnist Josh Whetherholt talks about former Vice President Dick Cheney's return to broadcast television | **Page 4**

STATE

Collectors to offer millions for rare coin

A rare 1804 Adams-Carter silver dollar will be auctioned this weekend and is expected to go for over 2 million dollars. | **Page 11**

NATION

Misleading health report

One million people may be at risk of contaminated water near a North Carolina Marine base thanks to a faulty report | **Page 10**

WASHINGTON

One more Democrat

In a sudden move, Pennsylvania Senator Arlen Specter switched parties after finding himself at odds with the Republican Party | **Page 9**

SPORTS

At home on the ball field

Junior left fielder Susan Sontag comes from a long line of ballplayers and a family who supports her efforts on and off the field | **Page 7**

PEOPLE ON THE STREET

What do you know about your USG Senators?



KYLE PETITJEAN
Sophomore, Film Production

"I know they made campaign promises that they probably won't follow through on." | **Page 4**

Students offered dental option

By Alison Lodge
Reporter

The University will be giving students something to smile about this academic school year.

A student dental insurance plan through Aetna, the same company the University uses for its student health insurance plan, will be offered beginning August 1.

According to Aetna's Web site,

the plan will be available to all students and will cost an annual premium of \$244. Additional plans are also being offered for married students and students with families.

The plan will cover 100 percent of all preventative care, including two cleanings a year. Basic care, such as fillings, will be covered at 80 percent with participating providers. Fifty percent of any major

"I don't go [to the dentist] now because it's so expensive."

Kyle Sherman | Junior

dental work will be covered, which includes bridges, root canals and

any procedure done under anesthesia. Students will have a maximum \$1000 deductible.

Junior Kyle Sherman said he is still covered under his parent's health insurance, but has no dental insurance.

"I don't go [to the dentist] now because it's so expensive," Sherman said. "It's really expensive."

Sherman said he would definitely be interested in a dental

plan through the University as long as he could go to dentists in the Bowling Green area.

Students will have the opportunity to choose their own dentist using the Aetna Dental Online Provider directory that will link them to all participating dental offices.

Student Insurance Specialist Ann Cromley said there are currently 38 in-network primary care dentists within 15 miles from the University.

Cromley said the University hopes to have everything in place for students to sign up by May 18. Students can choose annual coverage from August 1 through July 31 at the \$244 rate or may opt to sign up for the spring/summer semester only for \$144.

An outline of the plan being offered can be found on the Aetna Student Health Web site at www.aetnastudenthealth.com.

Get to know the 2009-2010 USG senators

Familiar and new face: All positions for Undergraduate Student Government

By Becky Tener
Reporter

In light of the Stroh Center Referendum, many students are asking whether

the Undergraduate Student Government adequately represents the student body. Here are the up-and-coming senators for the 2009-2010 school year. Do they represent you?



Justin Albright

Position: Senator At Large
Year: Junior
Major: Political Science and Interpersonal Communications
Involvement: Delta Chi and Interfraternity Council
Interesting fact: Was the first baby born in Dayton for the year of 1988.



Leo Almeida

Position: Senator At Large
Year: Junior
Major: Ethnic Studies/Pre-Law
Involvement: President of the Leadership Academy, Mortar Board, Phi Kappa Phi and the Ethnic Student Center Committee
Interesting Fact: Recently became a U.S. Citizen.



Robert Bell

Position: Senator At Large
Year: Junior
Major: Neuroscience
Involvement: SMART, HUE, Project Excellence
Interesting Fact: Loves jeans.



Scott Bilbrey

Position: Off Campus Senator
Year: Sophomore
Major: Public Relations
Involvement: Event Coordinator for Beyond Words Journalism Workshop
Interesting Fact: None given



Jamie Brucker

Position: Senator At Large
Year: Sophomore
Major: Business
Involvement: Phi Mu Alpha
Interesting Fact: Is going to be a funeral home director.



Cassandra Collier

Position: Senator At Large
Year: Freshman
Major: Theater
Involvement: Arts Village and Steel Drum Ensemble
Interesting Fact: Was recruited to be the ringleader of a traveling Ohio circus.



Paul Conley

Position: Off Campus Senator
Year: Sophomore
Major: Sports Management
Involvement: Sport Management Alliance- Vice President, Inter Fraternal Council- Intramural Chair, Student Budget Committee and Pi Kappa Alpha
Interesting Fact: Is a Miami Dolphins Fan



Ryan Eckel

Position: College of Technology Senator
Year: Junior
Major: Flight Technology and Operations
Involvement: BGSU Flight School
Interesting Fact: Is a licensed pilot.



Joseph Edens

Position: Education Senator
Year: Sophomore
Major: History Education
Involvement: College Democrats
Interesting Fact: Can do the splits.



Jeremy England

Position: Musical Arts Senator
Year: Sophomore
Major: Vocal Music Education
Involvement: Phi Mu Alpha, ROTC, Perishing Rifles and A Capella Choir
Interesting Fact: Has been deployed to the Middle East.

See **SENATORS** | Page 2

E-cigarettes receive mixed reviews

By Jesper Bekkers
Reporter

For smokers across America, there is now an alternative to the traditional cigarettes sold in packs of 20.

The electronic cigarette, also known as an e-cigarette, is a stainless steel tube filled with liquid nicotine and powered by a battery. Users puff on them like regular cigarettes, but instead of smoke, the e-cigarette produces a fine, heated mist that absorbs into the lungs.

For Bowling Green Graduate Nick Wray, the e-cigarette gives him his shot of nicotine without getting the negative side-effects from tobacco. He started smoking electronic cigarettes two days before the tax increase on



BEN LOHMAN | THE BG NEWS

NO TOBACCO: Graduate student Nick Wray puffs on his e-cigarette. This new form of cigarette allows the user to smoke just nicotine without the other harmful chemicals.

regular tobacco in March.

But while many e-cigarette users love the new opportunities the smokes provide, The World Health Organization, which is

a United Nations organization dealing with public health, said

See **SMOKES** | Page 2

Abstinence hit gas store shelves

By Phil Torres
Reporter

The convenience store that offers "fast, friendly service and a quality shopping experience" now offers abstinence.

The Circle K located on 425 Wooster Street started selling purity rings a few weeks ago, however they were recently rotated out for another novelty item. Cashier Sara McGuire said.

Purity rings are pieces of jewelry worn to signify a pledge to sexual abstinence until marriage.

To put the idea of abstinence into perspective, a Gallup poll conducted Aug. 8, 2004 polled a total of 439 boys and girls ages 13-17

about the idea of abstaining from sex until marriage. A total of 56 percent polled said young people should abstain until marriage, while the other 42 percent said it doesn't matter one way or another.

Junior Nathanael Hein, who is active in Campus Crusade for Christ, feels purity rings are a good idea for anyone in a relationship.

"Not only from a religious aspect but from an emotional aspect, people our age are so underdeveloped that sex ruins relationships," he said.

He also thinks it was a bad idea Circle K sold puri-

See **PURITY** | Page 5



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SMOKES

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PHOTOS PROVIDED BY INDIVIDUAL SENATORS AND FACEBOOK.COM

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President Obama shares vision for rebuilding

The Obama administration has taken 'significant steps' to rebuild the unstable economic foundation

By Max Sarinsky
The Georgetown Hoyas

With the national spotlight shining on the Hilltop, President Obama offered his vision to rebuild the foundation of the U.S. economy and return economic prosperity to the nation in an address in Georgetown University's Gaston

Hall yesterday morning that capped off over 24 hours of excitement and anticipation throughout campus.

Speaking in front of an auditorium packed with students, White House guests and media, Obama said that his administration has taken significant steps in its first 100 days to upend the economic downturn, but that much work remained in order to rebuild the foundation that will ensure a prosperous and sustainable economy for years to come.

Obama began his speech by discussing the \$787 billion economic stimulus plan that he signed into law in April, saying that it was a necessary measure to stimulate spending and lending across the market. He added that countries that have historically responded to recessions by stimulating spending have experienced more speedy recoveries.

"Since the problems we face have all been feeding off of each other ... we've had no choice," he said. "Economists on the left and the right agree that the last thing the government should do during a recession is cut back on spending."

Obama said that the stimulus package has been just one piece of his plan toward economic recovery, which also includes strengthening the credit market, helping homeowners refinance their troubled mortgages, working with foreign leaders to reform international regulations and stabilizing the nation's battered auto industry.

The president reported that the economy has shown signs of recovery, but warned that there would be "more job loss, more foreclosures and more pain before it ends."

"The difficulties can't serve as an excuse for inaction ... We have been called to govern in extraordinary times, and that requires an extraordinary sense of responsibility."

Barack Obama | President of the United States

In the latter portion of his speech, Obama outlined the elements of his recovery plan, urging leaders from across the political spectrum to respond to the extraordinary demands of the times.

His five-step plan included enacting new financial regulations to prevent "reckless risk-taking," investing in education reform, committing to renewable energy development, reforming the health-care system to lower consumer costs and lowering the federal debt.

"It is my firm belief that our next task, beginning now, is to make sure such a crisis never happens again," he said.

Obama said that restoring America's educational prominence on the international stage will require a commitment to improve educational programs beginning in early childhood.

"By 2020, America will once again have the highest proportion of college graduates in the world," he said to a large applause.

Obama reaffirmed his commitment to restoring education in the sciences, saying that he hopes to see "our best and our brightest commit themselves to making things," rather than having so many college graduates "manipulate numbers."

Obama also urged leaders in Congress to act swiftly on the other parts of his plan, calling for the speedy implementation

of an economic framework for renewable-energy development, and saying that he expects to receive a bill by the end of the year offering new financial regulations. He urged bipartisan effort to address these measures and others - including restoring Social Security and reforming the tax code - saying that progress must not be impeded in Washington by "an attention span that has only gotten shorter with the 24-hour news cycle."

"The difficulties can't serve as an excuse for inaction - not anymore," he added. "We have been called to govern in extraordinary times, and that requires an extraordinary sense of responsibility."

The speech - which was supposed to begin at 11:30 a.m. but was several minutes behind schedule - lasted approximately 40 minutes.

Obama received two standing ovations that lasted slightly under one minute - first after being introduced by University President John J. DeGioia and later after concluding his remarks - and his speech was interrupted on several occasions by brief applause from the audience.

Obama began his speech by thanking DeGioia and the university for hosting the address, drawing laughs for joking about the university president's 7-year-old son John Thomas DeGioia.

BREAKING A LEG



BROOKE MOTT | THE BG NEWS

ACTING: Director Becky Katona instructs actors Arah, Leigh, and Scott in the rehearsal for "Big Love." The Advanced Directing class is displaying the talents of the directors and actors on Sunday at the Wooster Street Center at 1pm.

Bee class creates positive buzz

By Jennifer Joyner
Arkansas Traveler

"I love bees. This has been my favorite class on campus in four years."

Morgan Holladay | Senior

The University of Arkansas apiculture class - ENTO 4043 - has students excited to learn about honeybees and how to take care of them.

"I love bees. This has been my favorite class on campus in four years," said Morgan Holladay, a senior anthropology major.

Don Steinkraus, professor of entomology, uses lectures, videos and guest speakers to teach his students about bees. However, for the students involved, the most exciting part of the class is learning about bees firsthand.

"This class has inspired a passion and thirst for bees. I can't learn enough about bees," said Amanda Gillespie, a sophomore kinesiology major. "I honestly love this class and don't want it to end. The hands-on experience is the most surreal and exhilarating experience I've ever had."

Holladay said this class is the first at the UA to have a curriculum based on experimental learning.

"This class takes a holistic approach to learning science,

medicine and beekeeping," Holladay said.

During every class there is a "show and tell" portion when students bring examples of how bees are portrayed or used in today's culture. Students have presented everything from newspaper articles and poems about bees to empty honey liquor bottles.

The class also has dissected bees, made lip balm and hand cream out of beeswax, tasted different kinds of honey, and installed a beehive.

For many students, the most exciting project was unplanned.

After the ice storm earlier this semester, the class was contacted about a fallen tree with a bee colony in it, and members of the class went to collect it, said Sam Kincannon, a freshman horticulture major.

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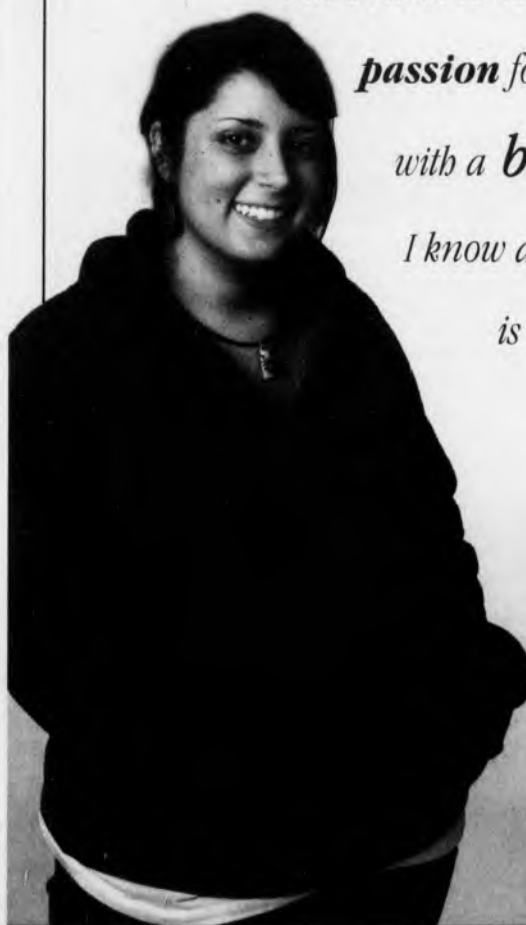
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President Obama shares vision for rebuilding

The Obama administration has taken 'significant steps' to rebuild the unstable economic foundation

By Max Sarinsky
The Georgetown Hoya

With the national spotlight shining on the Hilltop, President Obama offered his vision to rebuild the foundation of the U.S. economy and return economic prosperity to the nation in an address in Georgetown University's Gaston

Hall yesterday morning that capped off over 24 hours of excitement and anticipation throughout campus.

Speaking in front of an auditorium packed with students, White House guests and media, Obama said that his administration has taken significant steps in its first 100 days to upend the economic downturn, but that much work remained in order to rebuild the foundation that will ensure a prosperous and sustainable economy for years to come.

Obama began his speech by discussing the \$787 billion economic stimulus plan that he signed into law in April, saying that it was a necessary measure to stimulate spending and lending across the market. He added that countries that have historically responded to recessions by stimulating spending have experienced more speedy recoveries.

"Since the problems we face have all been feeding off of each other ... we've had no choice," he said. "Economists on the left and the right agree that the last thing the government should do during a recession is cut back on spending."

Obama said that the stimulus package has been just one piece of his plan toward economic recovery, which also includes strengthening the credit market, helping homeowners refinance their troubled mortgages, working with foreign leaders to reform international regulations and stabilizing the nation's battered auto industry.

The president reported that the economy has shown signs of recovery, but warned that there would be "more job loss, more foreclosures and more pain before it ends."

"The difficulties can't serve as an excuse for inaction ... We have been called to govern in extraordinary times, and that requires an extraordinary sense of responsibility."

Barack Obama | President of the United States

In the latter portion of his speech, Obama outlined the elements of his recovery plan, urging leaders from across the political spectrum to respond to the extraordinary demands of the times.

His five-step plan included enacting new financial regulations to prevent "reckless risk-taking," investing in education reform, committing to renewable energy development, reforming the health-care system to lower consumer costs and lowering the federal debt.

"It is my firm belief that our next task, beginning now, is to make sure such a crisis never happens again," he said.

Obama said that restoring America's educational prominence on the international stage will require a commitment to improve educational programs beginning in early childhood.

"By 2020, America will once again have the highest proportion of college graduates in the world," he said to a large applause.

Obama reaffirmed his commitment to restoring education in the sciences, saying that he hopes to see "our best and our brightest commit themselves to making things," rather than having so many college graduates "manipulate numbers."

Obama also urged leaders in Congress to act swiftly on the other parts of his plan, calling for the speedy implementation

of an economic framework for renewable-energy development, and saying that he expects to receive a bill by the end of the year offering new financial regulations. He urged bipartisan effort to address these measures and others — including restoring Social Security and reforming the tax code — saying that progress must not be impeded in Washington by "an attention span that has only gotten shorter with the 24-hour news cycle."

"The difficulties can't serve as an excuse for inaction — not anymore," he added. "We have been called to govern in extraordinary times, and that requires an extraordinary sense of responsibility."

The speech — which was supposed to begin at 11:30 a.m. but was several minutes behind schedule — lasted approximately 40 minutes.

Obama received two standing ovations that lasted slightly under one minute — first after being introduced by University President John J. DeGioia and later after concluding his remarks — and his speech was interrupted on several occasions by brief applause from the audience.

Obama began his speech by thanking DeGioia and the university for hosting the address, drawing laughs for joking about the university president's 7-year-old son John Thomas DeGioia.

BREAKING A LEG



BROOKE MOTT THE PIONEER

ACTING: Director Binky Katana instructs actors Anah, Leigh and Scott in the rehearsal for "R2 Love." The Advanced Directing class is displaying the talents of the directors and actors on Sunday at the Mountain Street Corner at 1pm.

Bee class creates positive buzz

By Jennifer Joyner
Ardenwood Journal

The University of Arkansas apiculture class — ENTO 4043 — has students excited to learn about honeybees and how to take care of them.

"I love bees. This has been my favorite class on campus in four years," said Morgan Holladay, a senior anthropology major.

Don Steinkraus, professor of entomology, uses lectures, videos and guest speakers to teach his students about bees. However, for the students involved, the most exciting part of the class is learning about bees firsthand.

"This class has inspired a passion and thirst for bees. I can't learn enough about bees," said Amanda Gillespie, a sophomore kinesiology major. "I honestly love this class and don't want it to end. The hands-on experience is the most surreal and exhilarating experience I've ever had."

Holladay said this class is the first at the UA to have a curriculum based on experimental learning.

"This class takes a holistic approach to learning science,

"I love bees. This has been my favorite class on campus in four years."

Morgan Holladay | Student

medicine and beekeeping," Holladay said.

During every class there is a "show and tell" portion when students bring examples of how bees are portrayed or used in today's culture. Students have presented everything from newspaper articles and poems about bees to empty honey liquor bottles.

The class also has dissected bees, made lip balm and hand cream out of beeswax, tasted different kinds of honey, and installed a beehive.

For many students, the most exciting project was unplanned.

After the ice storm earlier this semester, the class was contacted about a fallen tree with a bee colony in it, and members of the class went to collect it, said Sam Kincannon, a freshman horticulture major.

GET A LIFE

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Some events taken from events.bgu.edu

8 a.m. - 11 p.m.

Book Buy Back

Union 228

8 a.m. - 9 p.m.

Exhibit #12: Joe Meiser

Exhibit

Gallery Space

8 a.m. - 11 p.m.

Muslim Student Association

Prayer Room

Olscamp 204

9 a.m. - 6 p.m.

Tie Dye Thom

Table Space on Educ Bldg North

steps

4 - 5 p.m.

Provost Town Forum

Union Ballroom B

5:30 - 6:30 p.m.

Coming Out Support Group

107 Hanna Hall

9 - 11 p.m.

Wednesdays in the Pub:

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Black Swamp Pub

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"Not only from a religious aspect but from an emotional aspect, people our age are so underdeveloped that sex ruins relationships."
— Nathanael Hein, junior and member of Campus Crusade for Christ, on the belief that purity rings are good for anyone in a relationship [see story pg. 1].

Wednesday, April 29, 2009 4

PEOPLE ON THE STREET

What do you know about your USG senators?



"I know they're students."

JULIA FINDLING,
Junior,
Theater



"Sean Lutzmann has fun Facebook statuses."

TRAVIS COOK,
Senior,
Theater/Film Studies



"Not gonna lie, absolutely nothing."

EVERETT FITZHUGH,
Junior,
Sports Communication



"We have senators?"

SARAH ROSSITER,
Sophomore,
Biology/Chemistry

VISIT US AT BGVIEWS.COM
Have your own take on today's People On The Street? Or a suggestion for a question? Give us your feedback at bgviews.com.

Smoking ban just one more attempt to 'nanny' students

By Richard Berthold
Daily Lobo

The Nanny State, the government that wants us to avoid alcohol and drugs and wear a seat belt and be nice to one another, has come to the University of New Mexico. Beginning with the fall semester, all smoking will be banned from campus, except in designated areas. Actually, liquor has long been banned from the University, but such is due to the administration's fear of lawsuits, not the Nanny goal of protecting us from ourselves.

And why are those in power taking this odd action of prohibiting smoking outdoors? According to the administrators, it is to protect the health and sensibilities of the non-smokers on campus and — left unsaid — to hassle smokers into becoming better persons by not smoking.

Well, I find it hard to believe that briefly encountering the secondhand smoke of someone puffing away outside could possibly be deleterious to one's health. And chewing tobacco is certainly not going to have an impact on anyone but the person doing the masticating. Sure, it is a disgusting practice, but even more so are the grossly obese, who are also a burden on our health care system. I personally find the cell-phone talkers very annoying, and what about those who smell, like everyone's favorite campus nudist?

This is social engineering, the generally abortive attempt to alter behavior through legislation, which typically infringes on personal freedom. Smoking is in fact legal, yet there is constant pressure on smokers to mend their ways (in contrast to the mega-eaters), especially by piling up the tax on tobacco products. This is of course a relatively politically painless way to raise revenue, but that is rarely mentioned. Instead, increased tax on cigarettes is trumpeted as a measure to dissuade young people from smoking, ignoring the fact that young people in this society seem to have more disposable income than any other group. And are we responsible for what other people's children do? Ignored also is the fact that these

are regressive taxes, falling more heavily upon the poor, who constitute the major nicotine class in America.

The new ban is also unenforceable. The prohibition of smoking on high school campuses does not work well, even though they are more closely monitored than could be the case at UNM. Years ago, the University banned skateboarding on campus. How many skateboarders do you see every day at the university? Are we to encourage student snitches? Will the perpetrator receive a trial? And what about faculty smokers? How can the administration punish them? Decades ago the administration began deducting unpaid library fines from faculty paychecks. That lasted exactly one year. Will a tenured faculty member be terminated for lighting up on campus? Perhaps the University will hire smoking police. There

are, after all, a lot of unemployed Blackwater mercenaries available since they were kicked out of Iraq. Or even better: Use all those unnecessary vice presidents and assistant vice presidents to patrol the campus. They could wear cool uniforms, patterned perhaps after those of the NKVD or SS.

And, of course, this whole anti-smoking campaign is inherently racist. Tobacco, it should be remembered, is the great gift of American Indians to the rest of humanity. What a fantastic trade-off: Whitey got tobacco and the Indians got distilled spirits, a marriage made in heaven.

Smokers and those who support personal freedom unite! You have nothing to lose but — what? Absolutely nothing. Unless the smoke police (the do-gooders who will inevitably rise to the occasion) carry cameras, what are the deans and department chairs and whoever going to do for evidence? Will the University be doing DNA tests on cigarette butts?

Ignore the whole thing, just as the teenagers ignore the skateboarding rules and administration ignores the University's ethical guidelines. Launch a smoke-in. I will appear on campus in my Homeland Security uniform to hassle anyone hassling smokers.

"This is social engineering, the generally abortive attempt to alter behavior through legislation, which typically infringes on personal freedom."

WALKING IS STILL HONEST



KEITH PAKIZ | THE BG NEWS

Cheney reemerges now that Obama is in charge



JOSH WHETHERHOLT
COLUMNIST

Ladies and gentlemen, the devil has returned and he is being broadcast on televisions nationwide. His evil return is guaranteed to bring devastation and maybe even make your head explode. I am of course talking about the return to television of former Vice President and primary American fascist, Dick Cheney.

I really do not understand what has compelled good ol' Dick to come out now just to bash the Obama White House for press releases and other media-related goings on, when Dick couldn't even be bothered to do so when he and Bush were in office not five months ago.

This is a man who was rushed

away to an undisclosed location after 9/11 and, as far as we all know, stayed there, living on granola bars and the sweet blood of his enemies until he emerged for Obama's inauguration rocking a wheel chair.

It seems every time I turn around now, Cheney is polluting the political talk shows with his insane, inane rhetoric about torture and how America is safer because we simulated drowning people, ultimately making us no better than the alleged terrorists we are torturing.

We know if you actually were the dark lord of the Sith, Dick, you would use the force to choke a confession out of every potential terrorist until carpal tunnel ate away your arm, but it's just not how things are working now.

Recently, President Obama ordered the public release of some memos outlining the Bush administration's policy on how to go about obtaining informa-

tion from a terrorist detainee, and this is where the whole water boarding thing came to light.

At first Cheney opposed releasing the memos, but now he is complaining about Obama not releasing ones that showed positive results from the torture. Too bad when it comes to torture and water boarding, the ends do not justify the means.

Long story short, you wanted to hide from the American public for the last eight years, Dick. You wanted to remain underground and secret and keep your chubby, arthritic hands on the puppet strings.

Now that everyone is ready to forget the horrible reign of ignorance, fear and outright stupidity you and your lackey forced down our throats, you rear your hideous head again. Just crawl back down the black hole from whence you came and leave us all alone.

No matter how much distaste

I have for your policies and how much I doubt your moral fiber, I at least hoped you were smarter and had more dignity than to go rank and file with these other neo-conservatives like Bill O'Reilly or Ann Coulter, attacking Obama's policy just to be a sore loser. You are better than that, or at least I thought you were. Guess I underestimated your pettiness and malevolence yet again.

Dick, you will have to deal with the fact that we no longer want to deal with your Constitution-destroying PATRIOT Act policies or any of the other fear-mongering and ignorance of the last eight years. We want to rebuild the face of America and make it what it once was: a place of actual justice and truth, not illegal detainment and torture.

— Respond to Josh at thenews@bgnews.com.

Susan Boyle showcases the unattractive side of the entertainment industry

By Andy Bockelman
The Mirror

Attractive people are the only ones worth the world's attention. Unless, of course, you've got talent. Then you can be forgiven for your appearance. Such is the message sent with the popularity of up-and-coming Scottish singer Susan Boyle.

Boyle, 47, made a huge splash that rippled worldwide when she appeared on "Britain's Got Talent" facing off against renowned nitpicker Simon Cowell. The heavy-set chanteuse — plain and dowdy by her own admission — shocked the crowd by belting out the "Les Misérables" tune "I Dreamed a Dream." Since then, the Internet has been abuzz with the emergence of a fresh, musical voice who represents the common people.

Much has been made of Boyle's ugly duckling story and her background. Originally surprising people with a false confession of never being kissed, Boyle seems to take pride in making her life sound worse than it is. This kind of media fodder is amusing in a kind of self-awareness viewpoint as the singer can keep everyone guessing as to what she will do next.

With a marketing campaign of having an unglamorous appearance combined with her amazing voice, Boyle could stand to make a phenomenal career out of her tale. But the public is uninterested in keeping Boyle as she is.

Making role models out of those who don't quite fit the traditional Hollywood standards — Nia Vardalos in "My Big Fat Greek Wedding" or America Ferrera in "Ugly Betty" — has been a pet

"Making role models out of those who don't quite fit the traditional Hollywood standards ... has been a pet project of the entertainment industry lately."

project of the entertainment industry lately. But while such endeavors promote a differentiation in standards of beauty, these have been counterproductive more often than not, turning talented women into martyrs of body image.

To quote another well-known musical act from across the pond, "another one bites the dust."

Though Boyle has not been quick to jump into makeover mode, much has been made about recent facial touch-ups, most notably her newly curled hair and trimmed eyebrows, chronicled in the tasteless E! Online story, "Big Plucking

Deal." A joke about Boyle on the recent episode of "South Park" said what we're all thinking: too much hype. The news media outlets have gone out of their way to promote Boyle's offbeat look more than her singing and as a result, have become guilty of preaching the same narrow-mindedness that made it easy for her to be overlooked in the first place.

One can only hope that Boyle can rise above this misguided attention to prove true the lyrics of the song that made her famous, a cry for a better life filled with love.

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The BG News Submission Policy

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR
are generally to be fewer than 300 words. These are usually in response to a current issue on the University's campus or the Bowling Green area.

GUEST COLUMNS
are generally longer pieces between 400 and 700 words. These are usually also in response to a current issue on the University's campus or the Bowling Green area. Two submissions per month maximum.

POLICIES: Letters to the Editor and Guest Columns are printed as space on the Opinion Page permits. Additional Letters to the Editor or Guest Columns may be published online. Name, year and phone number should be included for verification purposes. Personal attacks, unverified information or anonymous submissions will not be printed.

E-MAIL SUBMISSIONS
as an attachment to thenews@bgnews.com with the subject line marked "Letter to the Editor" or "Guest Column." All submissions are subject to review and editing for length and clarity before printing. The editor may change the headlines to submitted columns and letters at his or her discretion.

Opinion columns do not necessarily reflect the view of The BG News.



MARK HICKS | AP PHOTO

WIND BLOWN: Dorothy, left, and Lavern Utley of Rochester Hills, Mich., hold their dog, Tinker Bell Monday in Waterford Township, Mich. Tinker Bell has been reunited with her owners after a 70-mph gust of wind picked up the six-pound Chihuahua and tossed her out of sight.

Dog blown away from couple's home

WATERFORD TOWNSHIP, Mich. (AP) — Tinker Bell has been reunited with her owners after a 70-mph gust of wind picked up the six-pound Chihuahua and tossed her out of sight.

Dorothy and Lavern Utley credit a pet psychic for guiding

them on Monday to a wooded area nearly a mile from where 8-month-old Tinker Bell had been last seen. The brown long-haired dog was dirty and hungry but otherwise OK.

The Utleys, of Rochester, had set up an outdoor display Saturday at a flea market in

Waterford Township, 25 miles northwest of Detroit. Tinker Bell was standing on their platform trailer when she was swept away.

Dorothy Utley tells The Detroit News that her cherished pet "just went wild" upon seeing her.

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6	2	5	8	1	1	7	5	9
1	9	8	7	2	5	5	6	1
2	7	6	5	8	9	1	1	5
8	5	9	1	5	1	2	7	6
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PURITY

From Page 1

ty rings. By selling them at convenience stores "it lessens the value of the ring," Hein said.

Although dangers come along with having sex, such as pregnancy and STDs, many are not willing to give up the pleasure that comes along with it.

Freshman Andrew Stechschulte does not think his relationship with his girlfriend would be the same if they were abstinent.

"I would not have as close a bond with my partner if we were not having sex," he said.

Stechschulte thinks it's not a big problem that Circle K was selling the rings.

"People have their own views," he said. "I am not

here to judge."

Circle K began selling the purity rings in multiple sizes in displays next to their cashiers at a retail price of \$5.99 plus tax.

Cashier Trista Evanitcka said more people laughed at the rings than actually bought them. A lot of the college students that visited the store used the rings as a sort of "comic relief," she said.

"One customer talked about the irony of the purity rings and BGSTD," Evanitcka said, referring to the stereotype of University students being very sexually active.

The store also has condoms for sale, which sold much better than their counterparts, she said.

"We have sold one or two [rings] here, but I never actually sold one [a ring]," Evanitcka said.

A Circle K representative from the Great Lakes region would not comment on the addition of the rings being sold at some of their stores.

However, the representative did say the company that provides the store with the rings is Novelty Inc., located in Greenfield, Ind.. The company sells "the latest fashions in jewelry" including around 1,000 other "impulse items" sold to retailers across the country and world, according to Vice President of Licensing JR Merlau.

Merlau said the purity rings are "not religious based," and the company has a product development team that reviews the media to determine what they believe will sell.

"The rings for sale could be right next to some shot glasses," Merlau said.

Flaming Lips lose vote on Oklahoma state song

OKLAHOMA CITY — Oklahoma lawmakers who voted against making a Flaming Lips tune the official state rock song represent a minority of "small-minded religious wackos," the band's lead singer says.

Most state House members voted for a resolution recognizing 2002's "Do You Realize?," but conservatives who said they were offended by the band's clothing and language mustered enough votes to keep it from being adopted.

"Me, I just say look, it's a little minority of some small-minded religious wackos who think they can tell people what kind of T-shirts and what kind of music they can listen to, and the smart, rational, reasonable people of Oklahoma are never going to buy into that," frontman Wayne Coyne told Tulsa World in an interview Friday.

Gov. Brad Henry resolved the issue by announcing he would sign an executive order proclaiming "Do You Realize?" the official

rock song of Oklahoma. The song earned more than half of the 21,000 votes cast in an online contest.

The Grammy-winning group, formed in Norman in 1983, is known for its psychedelic rock and lyrics.

Rep. Corey Holland, R-Marlow, was offended when band member Michael Ivins wore a red T-shirt with a yellow hammer-and-sickle emblem, a traditional symbol of the Communist Party, during a visit to the Capitol last month.

"The great thing about this country is he has the right to make whatever statement he wants to make," Holland said. "I have the right to be offended by that."

The shirt was a Christmas present to Ivins from Coyne's wife, and he wore it to a rehearsal earlier that day, said Coyne, who was offended by Holland's implication that the band is un-American.

Rep. Mike Reynolds, R-Oklahoma City, also denounced Coyne for using an expletive at an event.

Despite the criticism, Coyne said he always expected state residents to stand up for their native sons.

"People would have a reason to really fight for us and say, 'No, this isn't what Oklahoma is all about,'" Coyne said. "And I think the governor is very cool, how he's come to our rescue."

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SIDELINES



FOOTBALL

Quan Cosby agrees to terms with Cincinnati Bengals

Quan Cosby, an undrafted free agent, agreed to terms with the Bengals on a contract yesterday and is expected to be at the team's minicamp on Friday. Cosby played at the University of Texas last year where he caught 92 passes. Knocks against Crosby include his being only 5'8" and being 26 years old.

ONLINE

The BG News Sports Blog

Be sure to log on to The BG News Sports Blog for continued coverage of your favorite Falcon sports teams. Visit the blog today for live blogs from each of the softball team's games, as well as a live blog from the baseball game. Also, don't forget that the blog will still be here after final exams are finished.

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SCHEDULE

TODAY

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at Notre Dame; 3 p.m.
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OUR CALL

Today in Sports History

1986—Boston Red Sox pitcher Roger Clemens strikes out 20 Seattle Mariners.

1892—Charlie Reilly becomes baseball's first pinch hitter.

The List

The draft is finally over and today we're taking a look at the five teams who came away from it with the best fit in a first round pick.

1. 49ers: Michael Crabtree fell into their lap at No. 10. The 49ers have been looking for a legit top receiver ever since Terrell Owens stormed out of town. Some call Crabtree the next Jerry Rice, what a good place to start.

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By Paul Barney
Reporter

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ETHAN MAGOC | THE BG NEWS

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'Baseball family'



ETHAN MAGOC | THE BG NEWS

Sontag comes from long line of ballplayers, has been on diamond for years

By Christopher Rambo
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There were also frequent rides in her mother's white Volkswagen Beetle, which was custom detailed with red-stitching, giving it the appearance of a large, German-engineered, gas-powered baseball.

Despite being surrounded by competition since the time she could walk, Sontag said her passion is genuine and not the result of overzealous parenting.

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SIDELINES



FOOTBALL

Quan Cosby agrees to terms with Cincinnati Bengals

Quan Cosby, an undrafted free agent, agreed to terms with the Bengals on a contract yesterday and is expected to be at the team's minicamp on Friday. Cosby played at the University of Texas last year where he caught 92 passes. Knocks against Crosby include his being only 5'8" and being 26 years old.

ONLINE

The BG News Sports Blog

Be sure to log on to The BG News Sports Blog for continued coverage of your favorite Falcon sports teams. Visit the blog today for live blogs from each of the softball team's games, as well as a live blog from the baseball game. Also, don't forget that the blog will still be here after final exams are finished.

www.bgnewssports.com

SCHEDULE

TODAY

Baseball

at Notre Dame; 3 p.m.

Softball

vs. Wright State; 3 p.m.

OUR CALL

Today in Sports History

1986—Boston Red Sox pitcher Roger Clemens strikes out 20 Seattle Mariners.

1892—Charlie Reilly becomes baseball's first pinch hitter.

The List

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SONTAG

From Page 7

and 42 stolen bases.

Sontag is not the only member of her family to enjoy considerable on-field success though. Her father, Dave, played collegiately at Toledo before becoming head coach at Monroe Jefferson where he manned the helm for 23 seasons, winning the 2002 state title, before stepping down so he could be free to watch Susan's high school career unfold.

Sontag's younger brother played four years of high school ball before accepting a scholarship to Indiana Tech in Fort Wayne. The family member with the largest athletic portfolio, however, would have to be Sontag's older brother, Ryan, who, after starring as an outfielder for Arizona St., has been drafted as a pitcher by the Chicago Cubs organization. He is currently honing his skills at the club's extended spring training in Mesa, Arizona.

"Watching my brother win a state title and accomplish all that he did really motivated me to try and do the same," Sontag said. "He definitely set the bar."

The expertise of both her father and elder brother would serve Sontag well when the time came for her to make the transition from high school to college.

"My father in particular really helped me out as far as college went," Sontag said. "He gave me a lot of advice as far as what to

expect from a team dynamic."

After visiting both Central Michigan and Ball State, Sontag eventually decided on Bowling Green because she found the University's small-town feel to her liking.

"I grew up my entire life in a small, close-knit town, so I thought the atmosphere here really fit me well," Sontag said.

As she did in high school, Sontag wasted little time in establishing herself at the collegiate level. She started 43 games her freshman year, finishing second on the team with nine home runs and fourth in RBIs with 23, as the Falcons soared to an overall record of 33-12.

"My freshman season was just an unforgettable year," Sontag said. "To come in and hit those home runs and then for the team to set a school record [for winning percentage] was just unreal."

After slumping through injuries and swing changes her sophomore season, Sontag has emerged this spring as one of the team's most consistent bats outside of Hayley Wiener.

Thus far she is hitting a solid .289 with three home runs and eight RBIs, and her 28 hits are good for third on the team.

As proficient as Sontag is on the field however, her athletic achievements are notably augmented by her exemplary work in the classroom. Sontag, like her brothers, was an excellent student in high school, earning the honor of class valedictorian.

Her 3.87 GPA here at BG has

done nothing to disprove the notion of Sontag as a gifted and disciplined learner. For her part, Sontag gives most of the credit for her educational prowess to her parents, both educators themselves, for instilling discipline and a will to succeed in her and her brothers from an early age.

"The rule was that we couldn't go outside and play or watch TV until our homework was completed, there were no exceptions," Sontag said. "At the time I did not like it at all, but now I am very grateful for all that my parents did in helping further my education. They taught me to be organized at all times and to always strive to take the extra step in everything I do."

Sontag, an architecture major, is due to graduate in 2011 and one day hopes to land a job with a major firm in a big city.

For now though, her primary focus is on helping the Falcons (4-10 in the Mid-American Conference) turn around what has been to this point a disappointing season.

"I think that there is a lot of untapped potential with this team," Sontag said. "But for whatever reason we just have not been able to put it together so far this year."

Through it all, she continues to lean on the support of her baseball-loving family.

"I owe everything I have to my parents," Sontag said. "They have molded me into what I am today, and for that I thank them very much."

from the national Olympic bodies before holding any disciplinary hearings. Athletes found guilty of doping face being disqualified from the Olympics and stripped of any medals they won.

In the meantime, national and international bodies are free to impose provisional suspensions of athletes, the IOC said.

A Greek race walker, Athanasia Tsoumeleka, announced in January that she had tested positive in the new Beijing checks. Tsoumeleka, who finished ninth in Beijing in the 20K walk, was charged by a Greek prosecutor earlier this month with using banned drugs.

The IOC previously disquali-

fied nine athletes for doping at the Aug. 8-24 Olympics. In addition, there were six doping cases involving horses in the equestrian competition.

The IOC is storing doping samples for eight years so they can be tested retroactively when new detection methods are developed.

The World Anti-Doping Agency welcomed the IOC findings. Under the WADA code, athletes can be disciplined up to eight years from the date of a doping violation.

"We suggest that athletes who may be tempted to cheat keep this reality in mind," WADA president John Fahey said. "We believe that retrospective testing serves as a strong deterrent."

Yankees lowering select ticket prices

By Ronald Blum
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Turns out a few more fans might be able to buy those empty front-row seats at Yankee Stadium.

The New York Yankees slashed prices on more than 40 percent of their front-row seats by up to 50 percent yesterday and announced many of those who bought tickets closest to the field for \$325-\$2,500 will be eligible for additional free seats.

Those initiatives could help pack previously unfilled areas that were an eye sore on television broadcasts during the opening homestand at the \$1.5 billion ballpark.

"There are a few hundred suite seats in our premium locations that have not been sold on a full season basis," Yankees managing general partner Hal Steinbrenner said in a statement. "As a result, and for many of our fans who have already purchased full season suite seats in such premium locations, the Yankees are announcing today a program that adjusts certain prices and benefits."

While most of the cheaper tickets in the second and third decks were sold for the opening six games, entire sections of cushioned blue seats with teal arm rests in the first nine rows in 25 sections went empty, areas that cost \$500 and up. In addition, many of the non-premium seats between the bases, which cost \$325 as part of season tickets and \$375 individually, also went unfilled.

MSNBC's Keith Olbermann, who owns three \$850 Legends Suite season tickets, was unhappy prices were cut only for those with front-row seats while others will be given additional tickets.

"If they're offering only selective refunds, depend upon it:

There are going to be lawsuits," he said. "Great, more tickets nobody wants. The silver lining here is that even more charities are going to be getting even more tickets from me."

The price of first-row season seats in nine sections of the Delta Sky360 Suite one deck up behind home plate was cut from \$750 to \$550.

Among the top non-premium seats in the lower deck, the Yankees announced a buy-three-get-one-free program for new \$325-a-seat season tickets in the 15 sections between the bases.

Steinbrenner said the Yankees had sold 85 percent of their premium seats and 37,000 full-season equivalents, more than 3.4 million tickets in all. But it was apparent most of the unsold seats were closest to the field.

In response, the team cut the price of first-row Legends Suite seats in four sections on the outer half of the dugouts and photo cages from \$2,500 to \$1,250. According to a count by The Associated Press, 48 seats were affected.

In addition, seats in the first row in the final three sections down each foul line were slashed from \$1,000 to \$650. That affects 68 seats.

In all, the AP count had the Yankees cutting the price of 116 of 258 front-rows seats, which have been on sale for up to \$2,625 for individual games. The team said the reductions will apply to this season only, and ticket buyers can receive either a refund or credit.

Assemblyman Richard Brodsky of Westchester, a frequent and vocal critic of the Yankees, said the reductions weren't enough.

"It's the public that built Yankee Stadium, and even at

these prices, the public has been excluded from the very stadium they built," Brodsky said. "It's a continuing disaster."

Those who bought \$2,500 first-row season tickets in the 11 sections surrounding the plate that weren't reduced — there are 98 seats in that area — will receive an equal number of free first-row tickets for the rest of the season. Those who bought \$1,250 first-row seats in the first two sections past each photo cage — 44 seats previously in that category — will receive free seats for 24 games.

Fans who bought \$850 Legends Suite season tickets — there are 843 seats located in that category — will get free seats in the same section for eight games and free seats in the \$500 section for four games.

Those who bought \$600 Legends Suite season tickets — 324 seats are in that area — will get free seats in the \$500 section for 10 games. Those who bought \$500 Legends Suite seats — there are 470 — will get free seats in that section for eight games.

Among the \$325 non-premium seats between the bases, the Yankees said fans who bought two or three season tickets will receive two free tickets for every other game starting with Thursday or Friday. Those who bought four or five season tickets will get two free seats for every game, those who bought six or seven will get three free seats for every game and those who bought season tickets will get four free seats for every game.

The Yankees have charged far higher prices than the Mets, whose top 92 seats behind home plate, called Delta Club Platinum, average \$495 under the team's five-tier variable pricing system at \$800 million Citi Field.

DOPING

From Page 7

a total of 948 samples from Beijing after new lab tests for CERA and insulin became available following the Olympics. The testing began in January and focused mainly on endurance events in cycling, rowing, swimming and athletics.

"The further analysis of the Beijing samples that we conducted should send a clear message that cheats can never assume that they have avoided detection," said Arne Ljungqvist, chairman of the IOC medical commission.

The IOC will wait for word

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Encarnacion out, placed on 15 day DL

By Joe Kay
The Associated Press

CINCINNATI — Edwin Encarnacion has been placed on the 15-day disabled list after tests found that the Cincinnati Reds third baseman has a chipped bone in his left wrist.

Encarnacion has been bothered by the wrist since spring training, when he also was slowed by a sore right shoulder on his throwing side. He struck out in the ninth inning of a 4-1 loss to Houston on Monday night, extending his slump to 1-for-28.

Encarnacion appeared to aggravate the wrist in his last at-bat on Monday, prompting the Reds to send him for tests.

"You never know until you do the tests," manager Dusty Baker said. "I don't know if he did it on the last swing yesterday or before. I saw him wince in his last at-bat."

The Reds called up infielder Adam Rosales from Triple-

A Louisville to take his spot. Rosales was batting .431 with four homers and 15 RBIs in 17 games. He played in 18 games for the Reds last season, batting .207 without a homer.

It was the first roster move of the season for the Reds, who also were missing left fielder Chris Dickerson on yesterday.

Dickerson bumped heads with Houston shortstop Miguel Tejada while sliding into second Monday night. Dickerson left the game an inning later with a headache and dizziness. He was tested on Tuesday to determine if he suffered a concussion.

"I feel fine," Dickerson said. "No dizziness. I still have a little bit of a headache. My mental processing is a little hazy. I noticed that during the test."

Dickerson took a test that involved memorizing patterns and number sequences. He said one of his scores was significantly lower than when



DAVID PHILLIP / AP PHOTO
CHIPPY: A chipped bone in Edwin Encarnacion's elbow will keep him out.

he took the test during spring training. Baker expects him to sit out the last two games of the series against Houston.

"He's feeling better, but he's not 100 percent yet," Baker said. "He's not doing too much activity."

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CHIT CHAT: Senate Judiciary Chairman Patrick Leahy, D-Vt., right, talks with the committee's ranking Republican Sen. Arlen Specter, R-Pa., on Capitol Hill in Washington.

Veteran politician switches sides unexpectedly

By David Esposito
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Veteran Republican Arlen Specter of Pennsylvania switched parties yesterday with a suddenness that seemed to stun the Senate, a moderate's defection that pushed Democrats to within a seat of a 60-vote filibuster-resistant majority with President Barack Obama's key legislative priorities on the horizon.

Specter, 79 and seeking a sixth term in 2010, conceded bluntly that his chances of winning a Pennsylvania Republican primary next year were bleak in a party grown increasingly conservative. But he cast his decision as one of principle, rather than fueled by political ambition as spurned GOP leaders alleged.

"I have found myself increasingly at odds with the Republican philosophy and more in line with the philosophy of the Democratic Party," he said at a news conference. He added, "I am not prepared to have my 29 year record in the United States Senate decided by the Pennsylvania Republican primary electorate."

Not long after Specter met privately with Republican senators to explain his decision, the party's leader, Sen. Mitch McConnell, said the switch posed a "threat to the country." The issue, he said, "really relates to ... whether or not in the United States of America our people want the majority party to have whatever it wants, without restraint, without a check or balance."

As a result of last fall's elections, Democrats control the White House and have a large majority in the House. Specter's switch leaves them with 59 Senate seats. Democrat Al Franken is ahead in a marathon recount in Minnesota. If he ultimately defeats Republican Norm Coleman, he would become the party's 60th vote — the number needed to overcome a filibuster that might otherwise block legislation.

Specter, who has a lifelong record of independence, told reporters, "I will not be an automatic 60th vote." As evidence, he pointed out he opposes "card check" legislation to make it easier for workers to form unions, a bill that is organized labor's top priority this year.

His move comes as Democrats are looking ahead to battles on health care, energy and education.

Specter was one of only three Republicans in Congress who voted for Obama's economic stimulus bill earlier this year, a measure the senator said was needed to head off the threat of another Great Depression.

Specter called the White House yesterday to notify Obama of his decision to switch. The president called back moments later, according to spokesman Robert Gibbs, to say the Democratic Party was "thrilled to have you."

Several officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, said discussions of a possible switch had reached into the White House in recent days, although Gibbs said he had no details.

Gibbs said Obama would raise money for Specter as well as campaign personally for him if asked.

Specter told reporters at his news conference that Gov. Ed Rendell, a Democrat, had suggested a meeting in Washington for this week at which the party's leadership could formally "endorse my candidacy."

In Pennsylvania, State Rep.

Josh Shapiro, a Democrat, swiftly announced he was no longer interested in running for the Senate next year. The only announced Democratic candidate has been Joe Torsella, chairman of the State Board of Education.

Among Republicans, former Rep. Pat Toomey is expected to run. He had been poised to challenge Specter, who defeated him narrowly in a 2004 primary.

"I welcome Senator Specter and his moderate voice to our diverse caucus," Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., said in a statement that was a jab at the Republicans.

Other Democrats spread the word on Twitter in a way that reflected surprise. "Specter to switch parties? Wow," said a message sent by Sen. Claire McCaskill of Missouri.

Ironically, Specter had spoken aloud recently about the importance of a strong Republican presence in the Senate.

"If we lose my seat they have 60 Democrats, they will pass card check, you will have the Obama tax increases, they will carry out his big spending plans. So the 41st Republican, whose name is Arlen Specter, is vital to stopping tax increases, passage of card check and the Obama big spending plans."

Pennsylvania has voted increasingly Democratic in recent elections, and Obama's candidacy in 2008 prompted thousands of voters to switch their registration to his party. Specter said their migration had left the GOP primary electorate "very far to the right."

After nearly six full terms in the Senate, Specter is one of a handful of moderate Republicans left, a politician of remarkable resilience who has maneuvered successfully to protect his seat at home and his seniority rights in Congress.

In line to become chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee in 2004, he was forced to reassure conservatives he would not attempt to thwart them on President George W. Bush's conservative judicial nominees. As a senior lawmaker on the Senate Appropriations Committee, he is responsible for a steady stream of federal projects in his state.

In recent years, he has battled Hodgkin's disease, a cancer of the lymphatic system, but maintains a busy schedule that includes daily games of squash.

Specter was the sixth senator to switch parties in the past 15 years, and the first to leave the Republicans since former Sen. James Jeffords of Vermont became an independent in 2001. Jeffords' defection gave Democrats control of the Senate. Reid, then the second-ranking Democrat, played a role in that change, as well, offering to give up a committee chairmanship so Jeffords could retain it.

As one of the most senior Republicans in the Senate, Specter held powerful positions on the Judiciary and Appropriations committees. It was not clear how Democrats would calculate his seniority in assigning committee perches.

As recently as late winter, he was asked by a reporter why he had not taken Democrats up on past offers to switch parties.

"Because I am a Republican," he said at the time.

Yesterday's switch was not Specter's first.

He was a Democrat until 1965, when he ran successfully on the Republican ticket for district attorney in Philadelphia.

By Stephen Manning
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Treasury Department has reached a tentative agreement with four of Chrysler's major debt holders in a bid to keep the automaker out of bankruptcy protection, two people familiar with the talks said yesterday.

Under the agreement, the four banks will forgo claims to their portion of Chrysler's \$6.9 billion debt in exchange for \$2 billion in cash when the deal closes, said the people, who spoke on condition of anonymity because the agreement has not been formally announced.

"We view this as a huge step forward," said one of the people.

The people did not identify the banks involved in the deal, but Treasury has been negotiating with a committee of creditors including Citigroup Inc., JPMorgan Chase & Co., Goldman Sachs Group Inc., Morgan Stanley and several smaller banks, plus some hedge funds.

Messages seeking comment were left for representatives of



DEADLINE APPROACHING: Fiat vice Chairman John Philip Elkann gets into a car following an Exor shareholders meeting in Turin, Italy, yesterday.

the banks.

Treasury needs to persuade all 46 banks and hedge funds that hold Chrysler debt to go along, the people said. If not, a bankruptcy filing could still be possible for the nation's third largest automaker.

If the remaining debt holders agree to the deal, that leaves a partnership with Italian automaker Fiat Group SpA as the lone remaining hurdle to Chrysler meeting a government-imposed deadline Thursday to complete

a number of major restructuring steps and become eligible for further government aid.

A person familiar with the Chrysler-Fiat talks said yesterday that the Fiat deal is near completion. Negotiators for both automakers and the government were waiting on the debt holders before finishing their talks, said the person, who asked not to be identified because the talks are ongoing.

Chrysler cleared another hurdle last weekend when it reached

a deal with the UAW that would give the union a 55 percent stake in the company and assurances over issues like worker health care. Factory-level union leaders voted unanimously Monday night to recommend rank-and-file members approve the deal, and ratification votes should be finished by today.

The people familiar with the matter said a "surgical" bankruptcy is still possible if all of Chrysler's creditors don't go along with the deal, but that it was not the preferred option for resolving Chrysler's problems.

The debt holders and the Treasury Department have been trading proposals in the past several weeks but had remained far apart on how much the creditors would recoup in a Chrysler restructuring. Debt holders last week offered to reduce their debt to \$3.75 billion in exchange for a 40 percent stake in the company. Treasury has offered much less generous terms.

The people said the government told the debt holders that they could lose everything if no deal was reached.

Possible policy for imposing fines on vulgar radio stations

By Mark Sherman
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court ruled narrowly yesterday in favor of a government policy that threatens broadcasters with fines over the use of even a single curse word on live television, yet stopped short of deciding whether the policy violates the Constitution.

In six separate opinions totaling 69 pages, the justices signaled serious concerns about the constitutionality of the Federal Communications Commission's "fleeting expletives" policy, but called on a federal appeals court to weigh whether it violates First Amendment guarantees of free speech.

By a 5-4 vote, however, the court did throw out a ruling by the 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in New York. That court had found in favor of a Fox Television-led challenge to the FCC policy and had returned the case to the agency for a "reasoned analysis" of its tougher line on indecency.

The commission appealed to the Supreme Court instead.

Justice Antonin Scalia, writ-

"[The] decision should reassure parents that their children can still be protected from the indecent material on the nation's airwaves."

Michael Copps | Acting FCC Chairman

ing for the court, said the FCC policy, adopted in 2004, is "neither arbitrary nor capricious."

Acting FCC Chairman Michael Copps called the decision "a big win for America's families." Copps said the "decision should reassure parents that their children can still be protected from indecent material on the nation's airwaves."

Fox expressed disappointment with the decision, but said it is "optimistic that we will ultimately prevail when the First Amendment issues are fully aired before the courts."

The FCC changed its longstanding policy after it concluded that a one-free-expletive rule did not make sense in the context of keeping the airwaves free of indecency when children are likely to be watching television.

The precipitating events were

live broadcasts of awards shows in which Bono, Cher and Nicole Richie let slip or perhaps purposely said variations of what Scalia called yesterday "the F- and S-words."

Under the new FCC rule, some words are so offensive that they always evoke sexual or excretory images. So-called fleeting expletives were not treated as indecent before then.

In its last major broadcast indecency case, the court ruled 31 years ago that the FCC could keep curse words off the airwaves between 6 a.m. and 10 p.m.

Justice Clarence Thomas sided with the majority yesterday, but nevertheless noted that the previous decision and an even earlier case "were unconvincing when they were issued, and the passage of time has only

increased doubt regarding their continued validity."

When the court upheld the FCC regulation in 1978, television broadcasts were the only source of images available to most Americans.

Today, the Internet, cable and satellite television are in millions of homes, yet the FCC's authority extends only to broadcast television and radio, as Thomas noted.

"For most consumers, traditional broadcast media programming is now bundled with cable or satellite services," he said.

Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, who dissented yesterday along with the other three liberal justices, similarly raised constitutional concerns. Ginsburg said that in a case that turns on government restriction of spoken words, "there is no way to hide the long shadow the First Amendment casts over what the commission has done."

The nub of yesterday's ruling was whether the FCC took a reasonable course in changing its policy and concluding that curse words referring to sex and excrement are always indecent.

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Virus infects New York students

By Sara Kugler
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — The global swine flu outbreak worsened yesterday as hundreds of students at a New York school fell ill and federal officials said they expected to see U.S. deaths from the virus.

Cuba suspended flights to and from Mexico, becoming the first country to impose a travel ban to the epicenter of the epidemic. The mayor of the capital cracked down further on public life, closing gyms and swimming pools and ordering restaurants to limit service to takeout.

Confirmed cases were reported for the first time as far away as New Zealand and Israel, joining the United States, Canada, Britain and Spain.

Swine flu is believed to have killed more than 150 people in Mexico, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said the U.S. has 68 confirmed cases in five states, with 45 in New York, one in Ohio, one in Indiana, two in Kansas, six in Texas and 13 in California.

"I fully expect we will see deaths from this infection," said Richard Besser, acting director of the CDC.

That was echoed by Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano.

"It is very likely that we will see more serious presentations of illness and some deaths as we go through this flu cycle," she said.

President Barack Obama



PROTECTION: Karyia Lustig, center, training manager at La Clinica de la Raza, trains clerks Mayra Torres, left, and Angelina Galvan in the use of a respiratory protection mask.

asked Congress for \$1.5 billion in emergency funds to fight the illness.

In New York, there were growing signs that the virus was moving beyond St. Francis Preparatory school, where sick students started lining up last week at the nurse's office. The outbreak came just days after a group of students returned from spring break in Cancun.

At the 2,700-student school, the largest Roman Catholic high school in the nation, "many hundreds of students were ill with symptoms that are most likely swine flu," said Health Commissioner Thomas Frieden. The cases haven't been confirmed.

Twelve teachers reported flu-like symptoms as well, said the principal, Brother Leonard Conway.

A nearby public school for special education students was shut down after more than 80 students called in sick. Frieden

said that some of the students have siblings at St. Francis.

"It is here and it is spreading," Frieden said.

Still, U.S. officials stressed there was no need for panic and noted that flu outbreaks are quite common every year. The CDC estimates that about 36,000 people in the United States died of flu-related causes each year, on average, in the 1990s.

The increase in cases was not surprising. For days, CDC officials said they expected to see more confirmed cases — and more severe illnesses. Health officials across the country stepped up efforts to look for symptoms, especially among people who had traveled to Mexico.

U.S. scientists hope to have a key ingredient for a vaccine ready in early May, but it still will take a few months before any shots are available for the first required safety testing.

Federal report no longer considered accurate

By Rita Beamish
The Associated Press

In an about face, the government yesterday disavowed a 12-year-old federal report that found little or no cancer risk for adults who lived on a Marine base where drinking water was contaminated for three decades.

Up to 1 million people could have been exposed to toxins that seeped from a neighboring dry cleaner and industrial activity at Camp Lejeune, N.C., federal officials say. Now, a report that minimized the cancer threat for adults has been discredited.

"We can no longer stand behind the accuracy of the information in that document," William Cibulas, director of health assessment for the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, said at a meeting in Atlanta. "We know too much now."

Sick veterans, who became known as "poisoned patriots," and their advocates never believed the report's conclusions. Their families have filed claims for \$33.8 billion in damages. A study continues on whether fetuses might have been harmed.

The agency, charged with protecting public health around toxic sites, said it was rescinding the 1997 assessment on health effects of water that residents of the base drank and bathed in, because of omissions and scientific inaccuracy. That study found the water contamination began in the 1950s and continued until wells were shut down

"The science is just not that good for us to make that determination."

William Cibulas | Director

in 1987.

Jerry Ensminger, a retired Marine who has spent years digging through military and health documents at Camp Lejeune and believes his daughter Janey's leukemia death at age 9 was due to the water, welcomed the government's reversal on the report.

"We are in Day 99 of change, and by God we're starting to see it," he said, meaning the change promised by President Barack Obama. The report in question dates to Bill Clinton's administration.

The flawed document is being pulled from the Internet while the agency incorporates new science to rewrite what Cibulas called "troublesome" sections.

Among its problems, the document omitted mention of the cancer-causing chemical benzene, which military sampling found in a base well in 1984. Researchers should have mentioned its high levels and tried to verify whether it reached the drinking water, said Cibulas. He said Ensminger recently brought the omission of benzene to his attention.

Additionally, the contaminating solvents that officials focused on have been characterized by

new science as even more likely to cause cancer, he noted.

Cibulas also cited findings, reported in a 2007 Associated Press investigation of the water contamination, that the study underestimated the extent of the contamination on the base due to inadequate information from the Marines.

His unusual announcement came at a meeting of the health agency, part of the Health and Human Services Department, and its community advisory panel that works on follow-up to Camp Lejeune's past water problems.

Members of the panel have long criticized the health document's failings. Lawmakers who heard the Marines' stories last year dubbed them "poisoned patriots."

A table in the document stated unequivocally that adults faced no increased cancer risk from the water. Elsewhere, the report said cancer was not likely but more study was needed.

Cibulas voiced concern that the report was misinterpreted by Veterans Affairs and others as saying: "No way, no how, would any person who drank contaminated water at Camp Lejeune be expected to suffer any adverse health effects, be they cancerous or non-cancerous."

"The science is just not that good for us to make that determination," he said.

The 1997 assessment said children's cancer risk was unknown, but it cited studies showing potential cancer dangers from solvent-tainted water for fetuses.

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Searchers find missing Eagle Scout safe

By David Tirrell-Wysocki
The Associated Press

PINKHAM NOTCH, N.H. — An Eagle Scout whose mountain day hike went awry when unusually warm weather turned small streams into raging rivers, blocking his way, was found safe yesterday after spending three nights alone in the woods.

Scott Mason, a 17-year-old from Halifax, Mass., was spotted by searchers yesterday morning northwest of Mount Washington, the Northeast's highest mountain. He actually would have rescued himself within about 45 minutes by walking into plain view along a ridgeline, officials said.

Mason was reunited with his family at a command center about two hours later, hugging them and slapping his father on the back. He then was taken by ambulance to a hospital to have pain in one of his legs checked out, said Maj. Tim Acerno of New



JIM COLE | AP PHOTO

FOUND: Scott Mason gets a hug from his sister Amy Mason after spending three nights lost in the White Mountains in Pinkham Notch, N.H., yesterday.

Hampshire's Fish and Game Department.

"He looked a lot older. He looked sad and older," said his mother, Jory, who was trembling with emotion.

Mason, who earned his Eagle Scout badge six months ago, headed up Mount Washington early Saturday and was planning to hike 17 miles in one day. He had climbed the mountain three or four times, so it wasn't unusual for him to set off by himself on such a challenging hike.

But warm weather — it hit a record 56 degrees at Washington's summit on Saturday — forced a change in his route. As he was coming down a trail, "there was a big raging river in his way," said Fred Wilkinson, one of the rescuers who found him.

Over the next days, high waters and rain gave him trouble, as it did the searchers moving through waist-deep, soft snow. "Each time he is trying to get back to a trail, he's coming back to a river," Acerno said.

The teen's father, Mike Mason, said believing that his son wouldn't panic helped him stay calm.

"I hung in there because I had a sense he would hunker down and he was gonna pass this test," Mason said. "This is his basketball, football, this is what he loves."

Tom Goldrick, Mason's scoutmaster in Halifax, felt if anyone could survive the elements at the 6,288-foot Mount Washington, notorious for its unpredictable and often treacherous weather, it would be Mason.

"He's the most experienced

hiker in our scout troop. ... We all had a very positive outlook," Goldrick said.

Before leaving an Appalachian Mountain Club bunkhouse Saturday morning, Mason said he planned to climb Mount Washington, then take the Appalachian Trail north to the summits of Mounts Jefferson, Adams and Madison. He left the ridgeline around Mount Clay, descending into an area known as the Great Gulf Wilderness, where he was blocked by the river.

Searchers had been following intermittent boot tracks consistent with someone who was disoriented or lost, Acerno said. Searchers in six teams of four used ropes and temporary bridges as they approached the area from two directions, but had difficulty moving in the snow and water, Acerno said.

The unusually warm, humid weather since Saturday worked for and against Mason: Searchers weren't worried about hypothermia, but they said the melting snow had led to high rivers that would be difficult to cross.

Brian Clark, a meteorologist with the Mount Washington Observatory, said temperatures in the upper 20s are typical at this time of year. Saturday's high of 56 degrees was a record and temperatures on Sunday were in the upper 30s.

"Certainly if someone had to unexpectedly spend a few days up there it can't get much better than that," he said. "If we'd gotten normal weather for this time of year, it could've turned out differently."

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KIICHIRO SATO | AP PHOTO

STAYING CLOSE: Inmates are seen in the cafeteria during lunch at the Southeastern Correctional Institution Wednesday, April 22, 2009 in Lancaster, Ohio. Ohio's prisons are at 132 percent capacity and space is squeezing tighter by the day, said Prison Director Terry Collins.

Overcrowding affecting Ohio Prisons

By Julie Carr Smyth
The Associated Press

LANCASTER, Ohio — Rows of steel-framed bunk beds crowd inmates in one dormitory at the Southeastern Correctional Institution, and whatever cramped space that's left feels even tighter because of the towels, jackets and laundry bags dangling off beds into the narrow aisles.

On a recent day, 267 men were in one dorm with less than an arm span between beds. Another dorm, built in the early 1900s, had to pass a special engineering inspection just to hold the load of bunks the state added.

That's just a snapshot of the burgeoning overcrowding in Ohio's prisons. Facilities are at 132 percent of capacity and prisons director Terry Collins says the problem is getting worse.

"When you're pushing more people into a confined space, then they lose personal space," said Collins, who heads of Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction. "When any of us lose personal space, it creates extra tension. I mean, none of us like to have somebody right on top of us."

Collins is pushing sentencing reforms in the state Legislature that he says can help alleviate the problem and save money, including slightly raising dollar thresholds on certain offenses that lead to imprisonment, increasing from one to five the number of days in "good time" that can be shaved off a sentence, and requiring community-based punishments over prison in certain situations. He is scheduled to testify in the state Senate today.

"When you're pushing more people into a confined space they lose personal space."

Terry Collins | Prisons Director

The crowding is not unique to Ohio. According to the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics, American prisons moved from 2 percent over capacity to 11 percent over capacity between 2000 and 2005, the period for which the latest statistics are available. Collins said he and his colleagues around the country have only seen the problem grow since.

Earlier this month, the United Nations' crimes chief said prison crowding has become a problem worldwide.

Violence, theft and a lack of access to programs that could jump-start a crime-free life outside the prison system are all worsening problems as crowding builds, Collins said. Ohio's prisons are designed to house 38,665 people and are currently housing 50,814.

The crowding is bad for inmates, as well as staff, Collins said.

"Having double bunks certainly creates vision problems," he said. "Having staff trying to watch a larger number of people than what you'd like to have in the dormitory certainly creates issues."

Dormitories at the minimum security Fairfield County prison were intended to house bunks along the outside walls and single beds in the center of the room. That configuration would allow

guards clear sight lines to observe inmates' activity. Instead, guards must contend with beds, televisions and personal belongings propped along the concrete ledges while they try to do their job.

That creates stress, Collins said.

"It's harder to watch 100 than it is to watch 50," he said.

Inmates spend many hours a day in their dorm area — awaiting "count" five times throughout the day, resting at night and between job assignments, as well as socializing or watching TV, simply because there's nothing else to do.

This prison, one of 32 housing about nearly 51,000 inmates statewide, is designed to house 1,385 prisoners. One day earlier this month, the count was 1,636, with a total security staff of about 200.

Inmate Sam Taylor, doing 18 months on a burglary-related parole violation, said "things happen" when this many men are in tight quarters. That includes physical confrontations, gang activity, and theft of inmates' hard-won commissary items from their lockers while they're out.

There's no privacy — ever, he said, even to concentrate on a letter sent back home.

"Even in the bathroom there's no privacy," Taylor said. "A lot of guys like me — I'm 35, I've got a family out there, I've got a baby on the way — I need a lot of 'me time,' because I write. You really can't get that here."

Meals present perhaps the biggest risk for violent outbreaks, because inmates are crowded, hungry, and gathered in large numbers in the chow hall, Collins said.

Rare-coin to be auctioned for millions

By Terry Kinney
The Associated Press

CINCINNATI — The coin world is abuzz over the auction of a rare silver dollar, one of the most valuable in the world and one of only 15 known to exist from a never-circulated group made for the likes of the King of Siam and the Sultan of Muscat.

The 1804 Adams-Carter silver dollar fetched more than \$2 million in a private sale two years ago and is expected to top that again this week. The coin has been owned by a Boston banker, a Texas publishing mogul and by a collector who sold everything to help build a church school in Ohio.

The auction is a major happening for collectors — even ones who can't afford the expected price tag — partly because it will be a rare opportunity to see the coin. It's the highlight of the Central States Numismatic Society



AP FILE PHOTO

MILLIONS: The coin, pictured above, is expected to sell for at least \$2 million in a public auction April 29, 2009 in Cincinnati.

Convention that runs today through Saturday in Cincinnati. Anyone registered to bid on any item in the auction may view the coin, and that could number in the thousands, said Todd Imhof of Heritage Auction Galleries of Dallas.

Joe Barrett, co-owner of three Rare Coin Gallery shops in the

Cincinnati area, compared the convention to a movie buff's visit to a film museum, with Kevin Costner as tour guide.

"For coin people, it doesn't get any better than this," Barrett said. "For young collectors, this is an opportunity to see things they wouldn't get a chance to see otherwise."

Beth Deisher, editor of Coin World magazine, suggested the valuable coin may not be seen in public for another 50 years.

"It's a rare coin that has a great story," she said.

Coin Values magazine rates the 1804 Adams-Carter silver dollar as the seventh most valuable coin in the world. The most valuable is a 1933 \$20 double eagle that sold for \$7.6 million in 2002.

Only 15 of the 1804 silver dollars are known to have been struck, and coin aficionados can account for every one of them. Six are held by museums.

Lawyers appeal for new trial due to jurors experiments

By Lisa Cornwell
Associated Press Writer

CINCINNATI — A newlywed convicted of drowning his wife in the bathtub will try to get a new trial by alleging that jurors took the unusual step of conducting experiments to probe his testimony, legal analysts said.

Ryan Widmer, 28, was convicted April 2 in the bathtub death of his 24-year-old wife, Sarah, at their Hamilton Township home, just north of Cincinnati. Defense attorneys suggested at trial that the woman may have fallen asleep or suffered a medical problem while in the tub Aug. 11 and that her husband was simply trying to save her.

The defense's request for a new trial is based partly on allegations that some jurors performed at-home experiments on how long it takes a body to air-dry after a shower or bath. Paramedics testified

that the woman's hair was wet, but that her surroundings and her husband appeared dry.

William Gallagher, a Cincinnati criminal defense attorney, said there have been reports of jurors going back to a crime scene to reconstruct what occurred, doing Internet research and talking with relatives or friends in some cases.

But, he said, experiments are unusual.

"It's even rarer to see this kind of motion for a new trial that is not based on an alleged legal error, such as improper jury instruction or an improper ruling by a judge," said Gallagher, who is also on the board of directors for the National Association for Criminal Defense Lawyers.

The judge has postponed a hearing on the request for a new trial to allow more time to review filings in the case. Some legal experts expect it to be an uphill struggle to win a new trial.

"Judges are required to do



JEFF SWINGER | AP PHOTO

JAIL: In this AP file photo, Ryan Widmer is taken into custody after being convicted of murdering his wife by drowning.

what they can to sustain jury verdicts, and you don't overturn a verdict willy-nilly," said Christo Lassiter, a criminal law professor at the University of Cincinnati. "I don't think the judge would order a new trial unless he believes any juror misconduct makes it untenable for the court to have continued confidence in the verdict."

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Swine flu fast-moving, now overseas

By Andrew Selsky
The Associated Press

MEXICO CITY — Cuba suspended flights to and from Mexico yesterday, becoming the first country to impose a travel ban, as the fast-moving swine flu strain extended its reach overseas and in the United States.

World health officials in Geneva said they believed the virus appears to be establishing itself in communities and be able to produce larger outbreaks outside Mexico. In the U.S., there were new reports of hospitalizations among those affected, and officials are watching for a potential flu pandemic.

"It's a very serious possibility, but it is still too early to say that this is inevitable," the World Health Organization's flu chief, Dr. Keiji Fukuda, told a telephone news conference.

The global health body insisted that travel restrictions were ineffective, but Cuba's 48-hour suspension came as the EU's disease control agency as well as Canada, Israel and France warned against nonessential travel to Mexico.

"Border controls do not work. Travel restrictions do not work," WHO spokesman Gregory Hartl said, recalling the 2003 SARS epidemic that killed 774 people, mostly in Asia, and slowed the global economy.

"There was much more economic disruption caused by these measures than there was public health benefit," he said, adding that WHO is advising countries to provide treatment for the sick and make sure national plans are in place to ease the effects of a larger outbreak.

Mexico City closed gyms, swimming pools and pool halls yesterday, and ordered restaurants to limit service to takeout — extending a growing shutdown that already included schools, state-run theaters and other public places.

But the swine flu has already spread to at least six countries besides Mexico, prompting WHO to raise its alert level on Monday but not call for travel bans or border closings.

WHO raised the alert level to Phase 4, meaning there is sustained human-to-human transmission causing outbreaks in at least one country. WHO's pandemic alert system was revised after bird flu in Asia began to spread in 2004. Monday was the first time it has ever been raised above Phase 3.

Fukuda cited a New York City case in which some students were infected with the virus, but did not travel like some of their infected classmates to Mexico, where most of the people confirmed with the virus were stricken. He said health



RODRIGO ABDI / AP PHOTO

SICK: Wearing a face mask, a man sleeps sitting in an empty street in downtown Mexico City yesterday. World health officials raised a global alert as the swine flu was blamed for more deaths in Mexico.

experts are examining the situation.

WHO calls this "community transmission" and says it's a key test for gauging whether the spread of the virus has reached pandemic proportions.

In the U.S., federal health officials said yesterday that the number of confirmed cases rose to 64, and states say there were at least four more. The Los Angeles County coroner's office told the Los Angeles Times the recent deaths of two men were being examined for links to swine flu.

Pakistani military bomb Taliban near capitol

By Chris Brummitt
The Associated Press

ISLAMABAD — Pakistani jets and attack helicopters struck Taliban positions in mountains close to the capital yesterday as part of a widening offensive against militants spreading out from the lawless region along the border with Afghanistan, the military said.

With residents reporting ground troops also moving into the Buner area, the operation could alter worry in the U.S. and other Western nations that nuclear-armed Pakistan lacks the will to fight extremists in the northwest, where al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden is thought to be hiding.

The attack stands to further strain a shaky peace deal in the Malakand region, which Buner is a part of. The truce has been widely viewed in the West as a surrender to the militants and a sign Pakistan's shaky civilian government does not recognize the threat they pose.

Pakistan has waged several offensives in the border region since the Sept. 11, 2001, attack on the U.S., resulting in the deaths of dozens of civilians and the flight of hundreds of thousands of people from their homes.

Officials have frequently



MOHAMMAD SAJJAD / AP PHOTO

ATTACK: Pakistani soldiers get ready to pound hideouts of the Taliban and militants in the Pakistani district of Lower Dir, where security forces launched an operation against militants, yesterday.

claimed success from the assaults, but the ultraconservative area remains a haven for extremists who use it to stage attacks in Afghanistan, according to foreign governments.

Analysts say the 100,000-plus government soldiers in the border region have little experience in guerrilla operations, having been trained only to fight a conventional war against long-standing enemy India on the country's eastern flank.

Heavily armed militants began moving into Buner, about 60 miles (100 kilometers) from Islamabad, this month from the nearby Swat Valley. Swat, a one-time tourist destination, has turned into a militant haven under the peace deal, which imposed Islamic law in the area in exchange for an end to hostilities.

A military spokesman, Maj. Nasir Khan, said jets and heli-

copters attacked Taliban positions in mountains in the Babaji Kandao area of Buner yesterday afternoon. Casualty figures were not immediately known.

The military's chief spokesman, Maj. Gen. Athar Abbas, said troops were also moving into the region. He estimated the number of insurgents there at 450-500 and said the operation would be over within a week.

Mohammad Shahid Khan, a taxi driver, said he saw tanks, heavy artillery and hundreds of soldiers heading over the Ambala pass leading to Buner.

In a sign militants were preparing to put up a fight, Taliban fighters later yesterday took control of a police station in the town of Pir Baba, said another military official. He insisted on speaking anonymously because he was not authorized to release details to the media.

London bombers acquitted of terrorist attacks

By David Stringer
The Associated Press

LONDON — Three men charged in London's 2005 suicide bombings — Britain's deadliest attack since World War II — were acquitted of the most serious offenses against them yesterday in the latest terrorism case to frustrate prosecutors.

A jury found Waheed Ali, Sadeer Saleem, and Mohammed Shakil not guilty of conspiring with four suicide bombers who blew themselves up on three subway cars and a bus on July 7, 2005, killing 52 people. Ali and Shakil were convicted of a lesser charge — conspiring to attend a terror training camp — and will be sentenced today. The men were the only peo-



JOHNNY GREEN / AP PHOTO

ACQUITTED: Sadeer Saleem, right, was acquitted along with Waheed Ali of helping plan the 2005 London transit bombings.

ple ever charged in the attack. A different jury failed to reach a verdict in their case last year.

Andy Hayman, a retired senior police officer who previously led the inquiry, said the trial had been the "last throw of the dice" for investigators. There are no new leads and police say their inquiry has been thwarted by the reluctance of potential witnesses in Britain's Muslim community to come forward.

It was unclear why jurors came to their decision. British jurors are barred from speaking about their deliberations, even after a trial ends.

Lawyers pointed to the complexity of terrorism trials, which can last more than a year and involve detailed and sometimes confusing evidence gleaned from cell phone records and e-mail traffic.

Suspected pirates captured by Seychelles Coast Guard

By Rukmini Callimachi
The Associated Press

NAIROBI, Kenya — The Seychelles took custody of nine pirate suspects yesterday and accused them of trying to hijack a cruise liner carrying 1,000 tourists.

The island nation had dispatched an aircraft to trace the men through the Indian Ocean, resulting eventually in the capture of the suspects.

The MSC Melody, a luxury

cruise liner on its way to Europe from the southern tip of Africa, was attacked Saturday. Pirates in speed boats raced up to the ship under cover of darkness and unleashed a volley of automatic gunfire, but security guards aboard the liner fought them off, returning fire and spraying them with a fire hose.

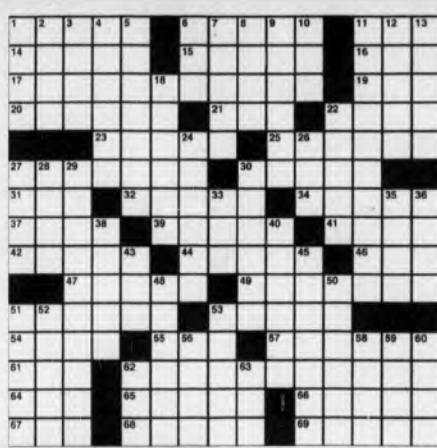
The ship made a distress call, and the Seychelles Coast Guard sent an aircraft to pinpoint the

location of the pirates, according to a government statement. The plane spent five hours in the air surveying the ocean, photographing the pirates' skiff and marking its position.

The Coast Guard transmitted the information to a Spanish frigate, which tracked the alleged pirate skiff and stopped it Sunday. Nine people on the skiff were apprehended and handed over to the Seychelles, the statement said.

The Daily Crossword Fix

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ACROSS

1 Cab fare calculator
6 Old saw
11 Jazz style
14 One at —
15 — dancer
16 Game with Skip and Reverse cards
17 Gopher's java-dispensing target?
19 "If I Ruled the World" rapper
20 Woman with a habit?
21 Motorists' org.
22 "Saturday Night Live" bit
23 Build
25 Distance runners
27 "Who cares?"
30 Sesame Street grouch
31 Discount rack abbr.
32 Correct, as text
34 Dispenser of theater programs
37 Open or pigeon add-on
39 Curved sword
41 What to do just before the sur-

prise party starts
42 Calendario page
44 Stunning weapon
46 Gopher's position
47 Guitar parts
49 Detected, as a rat?
51 Cascades peak
53 Port-au-Prince's country
54 Bodybuilder's pride, briefly
55 Lingerie buy
57 Command used when creating a new file name
61 Dory propeller
62 Drawing of the area next to the fairway?
64 " — Got a Secret"
65 Nurse, vis-à-vis medication
66 Wear away
67 Avignon article
68 "I'm with you, Reverend!" shouts
69 Lip —: mouths the words

1 Apples with screens
2 Needle case
3 Server's rewards
4 Hammed it up
5 Football official
6 Blood classification letters
7 Skim, as soup
8 — Romeo: sports car
9 Sparkles
10 Storm center
11 Mound near a sand trap?
12 Studio sign
13 Internet forum messages
18 Skin softeners
22 Symbol after "http:"
24 Soccer player's shoes
26 Post-op section
27 Light meal
28 Gopher's choice
29 Really large putting surface?
30 Ukrainian port
33 Org. for Bucks and Bulls
35 Pop singer Brickell
36 Sax or oboe
38 Bride's purchase
40 Careless
43 Halloween mo.
45 Hollywood do-overs
48 Explosion sound
50 Horse stable
51 Go bad
52 Throw with strain
53 Golf legend Walter
56 Bit of deception
58 Harrow rival
59 Elec. designation
60 " — Gotta Have It": Spike Lee film
62 Nutrition abbr.
63 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., e.g.

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